



**Date:** May 8, 2012

**To:** Thomas J. Bonfield, City Manager  
**From:** Karmisha R. Wallace, Assistant to the City Manager  
**Subject:** New Sister City Proposal for Zhuzhou, Hunan Province, China

### **Executive Summary**

The New Cities Committee of Sister Cities of Durham, Inc. is asking the Durham City Council to approve the application of the City of Zhuzhou, Hunan Province, China to be a Sister City with Durham, N.C.

### **Recommendation**

Based upon the many advantages and opportunities to promote international friendship, intercultural exchange, educational programs, and additional community involvement in international understanding; staff recommends that the Durham City Council approve the City of Zhuzhou as a Sister City.

### **Background**

Sister Cities of Durham, Inc. is a nonprofit organization that promotes international friendship, intercultural understanding, and economic development. The City of Durham's current Sister Cities are:

1. Arusha, Tanzania
2. Toyama, Japan
3. Kostroma, Russia
4. Durham, United Kingdom

The New Cities Committee and Board of Sister Cities of Durham, Inc. has unanimously approved the proposal for Zhuzhou, Hunan Province, China to become a new Sister City for the City of Durham.

Zhuzhou City has an urban population of approximately 1.5 million and a population of approximately 2 million spread across its five rural counties. It is located in south central China as one of the "Triangle Cities" of Hunan Province: Changsha (Capital), Zhuzhou and Xiangtan, a city cluster connected by highways within 30 minutes drive from each other, similar to the Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill Triangle region. Zhuzhou can be reached in one hour by air from Shanghai or Guangzhou, or two hours by train from Guangzhou or by air from Beijing.

Zhuzhou is a high-tech city with over 100 technological inventions in China. There are several top ranked universities and vocational colleges within one hour drive of Zhuzhou, including Xiangya School of Medicine which is one of the top medical schools in China originally established by American missionaries from Yale University.

### **Issues and Analysis**

The proposed sister city relationship will support the overall goals and objectives of sister cities of Durham through the establishment of sister schools, sister colleges, teacher exchange and training programs, K-12 exchange programs and summer camps, “Zhuzhou expo” in Durham and “Durham expo” in Zhuzhou, cultural and arts shows, and business cooperation forums. The Carolina China Council will fully support the proposed Durham-Zhuzhou sister city relationship.

Zhuzhou is located in south central China and can be accessed by direct flights from Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Beijing. The potential benefits of adding Zhuzhou as a Sister include:

1. A long-term relationship with a history and culture-rich city;
2. A framework for developing sister schools and colleges;
3. A platform for economic cooperation as both cities share similar roles in the “triangular” city clusters and high-tech oriented economy;
4. An ability for students and teachers to fully take advantage of the Hunan-North Carolina Bridge Scholarship as the Zhuzhou-Durham Sister City relationship will be complementary to the North Carolina-Hunan Sister State/Province relationship.

### **Alternatives**

The City Council could disapprove the request to add Zhuzhou as a Sister City and maintain relationships with its existing four Sister Cities.

### **Financial Impact**

There are no financial implications of approving Zhuzhou, Hunan Province, China as a Sister City to the City of Durham, NC.

### **SDBE Summary**

SDBE Guidelines do not apply to this request.

### **Attachments**

1. Letter from New Cities Committee Chair to President of Sister Cities of Durham
2. New Sister City Proposal for Zhuzhou, Hunan Province, China